

Plymouth Police Department

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KAREN KRASICKY
CHIEF OF POLICE

To: Chairman Victor Mitchell and the Honorable Members of the Police Station Building Committee

From: Chief Karen Krasicky

Re: New Police Department Facility

Date: April 8, 2019

Dear Chairman Mitchell and the Honorable Members of the Police Station Building Committee,

In 2009, I was asked to complete a report with respect to the reasons the Plymouth Police Department needs a new facility. On February 19, 2009 I completed said report. In September 2014, I was asked by Mr. Margus Laan to complete another report for the Planning and Zoning Commission and completed said report on September 10, 2014. I was also asked to complete a report for the Town Council and completed said report on September 22, 2014.

Below please find the contents of my original report from 2009 and the two reports from 2014. The two reports from 2014 included some additional information that was not in the 2009 report and this report includes some further information that was not contained in the three previous reports:

The Plymouth Police Department is presently located within the first floor of the Town Hall Facility at 80 Main Street, Terryville. The building was constructed in the early 1970's and the space the police department occupies is 2,600 sq. ft.

Several recommendations have been made that a new facility is needed. To date, only a minor bathroom modification, a conversion of the photo lab into a Criminal Investigation Room, and a State mandated Interrogation Room with a Viewing Room have been completed.

The space within the current facility is far below the average for a police facility. The department consists of various small rooms and lacks the space adequately needed to conduct training and large meetings and does not have detention facilities for juveniles.

Several studies were completed to address the needs of the police department and space needs of Town departments. This was first evident in a 1986 space study analysis completed in June 1986 by C.J. Lawlor Associates. In that document, the study stated the police department would operate better with a combined fire/safety complex. The study also stated the space needs were inadequate at that time. In 1998, a more comprehensive review was performed, and it was recommended the department be combined into a public safety complex with the ambulance and fire departments.

Within the scope of the complex idea, the police department was quoted as being "shoehorned into 2,600 sq. ft. of the basement of Town Hall." The recommendation at that time was to have the entire operation of the police function which was determined "cramped" relocated.

Along with that scope was a space analysis study that was conducted which concluded the department having 19 full-time members and 9 dispatchers had an average square foot range of 92.9. Other departments of similar size, for example Thomaston, had 392.3 sq. ft. of space per individual. This represented a 422% deficiency for our department. The department currently has 23 full-time officers, 5 full-time dispatchers, 6 part-time dispatchers, 1 administrative assistant, and 2 part-time animal control officers so the department space deficiency is now even greater. Renovations and new facilities have been built in Plainville, Southington, Farmington, and Canton doubling and in some instances tripling their space capacity.

While reviewing historical files concerning the police department, it was determined in 1986 the police facility lacked the space necessary to provide adequate police services. As a result, a space analysis was conducted and determined that the Town Hall may have to have an addition constructed to address these concerns. This plan never came to fruition.

Since that time, the Plymouth Volunteer Ambulance Corps has received a new facility to address their needs and the fire department has received an addition to one of their buildings to address the needs of that facility.

The Town of Plymouth should address the needs of the police department as soon as possible and begin taking steps towards the building of a new station. There are several key areas below that would be addressed with the construction of a new facility that are presently missing from the current facility and which leave the Town of Plymouth in jeopardy for liability as well as not meeting basic police requirements. The areas that would be addressed with a new facility include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Juvenile Detention Facilities. This is required per federal and state mandates. Juvenile matters must be kept confidential such as interviews, processing, detaining, and the keeping of records. In the present facility, there are no areas to detain juveniles safely without using the regular cell block area. Additionally, with the passage of a new state law, juveniles can now be anyone up to 18 years old;

- (2) No place for attorneys and suspects. Court decisions rule that there must be a place provided for private phone calls and meetings between suspects and their attorneys;
- (3) Separate female and male facilities. Until 2005, the facility only had a male bathroom and the male officers had to leave the locker room for the female officer to change, etc. Presently, even though modifications have been made, there still is not an adequate facility for female officers. In addition, the locker room lacks space for privacy and enough locker storage (lockers are too small);
- (4) Work Areas. Work areas for on-going investigations, major case work, and evidence processing are lacking. In 2004, modifications and changes were made to the old photo lab that converted this room into a Criminal Investigation Room and in 2013 a State Mandated Interrogation Room was constructed but there is still little or no space for evidence processing. In addition, the room that was utilized for the Interrogation Room was the department's Evidence Room. The evidence is currently being stored in 3 separate areas due to the severe lack of space which is not in compliance with State statutes, one area being two closets in the Chief of Police's office;
- (5) Arsenal. There is no facility to properly store firearms, ammunition, and other departmental weapons. While there may be some secure storage cabinets, there lacks a designated place for the placement of these items. This is a very serious issue that would be addressed with more space which would be available in the new facility;
- (6) Booking Room. The Booking Room is presently located in a very small room in the police department. The booking "area" is not secure and is often, a hindrance with ongoing investigations, interrogations, etc.;
- (7) Combination Classroom and Conference Room. There is presently no room within the police station to hold on-going classes, roll-call, or large general or staff meetings. Members of the department who conduct training classes must seek a facility elsewhere in the Town to complete their training programs. This often becomes an inconvenience due to other departments and groups using these facilities. The Chief's Office has a table and chairs for small staff meetings but cannot be utilized for larger general, staff, conference, or emergency department and/or Town personnel meetings;
- (8) Animal Control Officers' Room – There is presently no separate room for the part-time Animal Control Officers to work. These ACOs are civilian employees and when the officers are utilizing the general work area and/or handling confidential matters to which these ACOs cannot be privy, they have no place to do their work.
- (9) Dispatch Center. The present Dispatch Center is completely insufficient for its operations. The center is located between the Assistant Chief's office and the main entrance. The facility is unsecure and lacks proper ventilation, space for mandated equipment, storage, break/bathroom facilities, etc.;
- (10) Safety Issues, Chief's Office. The Chief's Office is directly off the main lobby of the police station and should be not located there for safety and protocol reasons.

The above items are just some of the many space issues lacking in the present police department facility. Since September 11, 2001, many avenues should have been addressed. The police department in its present state does not have security measures that are necessary to operate during a catastrophe. Since the department is located within the Town Hall, there are common entrances for police and public vehicles. The fire exits are located near where the prisoners are booked and processed posing an escape risk, especially with the public present.

A recommendation made in 1998 of sworn officers and personnel for the department was determined based on growth patterns of the Town and plans of development. This recommendation suggested there should be one full-time patrol police officer for every 500 persons. Using the formula that was used in 1998 with twenty-eight (28) employees, the new facility should have been approximately 11,900 sq. ft. in size. In addition, this facility would house the Communications Center for the Town since the police department is open 24 hours a day. With the increase in total department personnel since this recommendation was made to thirty-seven (37), the necessary police facility square footage must be increased to at least 15,725 sq. ft. If future considerations with respect to growth are factored into the equation then the facility should be even larger than 15,725 sq. ft. The cost for this project would depend on many factors including the acquisition of suitable land, furnishings, new communications systems, design/inspection fees, studies, permits, etc.

It was recommended 20 years ago (1986) that more space and/or a new facility was necessary for the police department. Since that time, the department has grown, the Town has grown, State mandates have increased, and crime is still persistent. It is imperative that a new police department facility become a priority item and be completed as soon as possible.

Mayor David Merchant asked me to collect information with respect to a new police department, so I and Assistant Chief Robert Wright visited the Canton, Farmington, and Southington Police Departments because they were recently constructed. Space usage information and copies of the floor plans for these departments were provided to Mayor Merchant. A draft floor plan for a new police department utilizing the space in the Board of Education Building, 77 Main Street, Terryville, which was the location that was proposed to me by Mayor Merchant, was compiled by a local architect and forwarded to us for our review. Assistant Chief Wright and I made some modifications and returned the floor plan for the proposed new police department back to Mayor Merchant. If I may be of any further assistance in this matter please do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,



Chief Karen Krasicky